

**From:** [Swenson, Peter](#)  
**To:** (b)(6)(b)(6)(b)(6)  
**Bcc:** [McCree, Barbara](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Back Forty Mine Project in Menominee County, Michigan  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 13, 2017 12:54:00 PM

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Dear (b)(6)(b)(6)

Thank you for your message concerning the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin's letter regarding the wetlands permit for the Back Forty mine.

EPA is in receipt the letter from the tribal chair, and is currently preparing a response.

*Peter Swenson  
Chief, Watersheds and Wetlands Branch  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5*

**From:** (b)(6)(b)(6)(b)(6)(b)(6)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 12, 2017 7:06 PM  
**To:** Kaplan, Robert <[kaplan.robert@epa.gov](mailto:kaplan.robert@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** [nowatarski.allison@epa.gov](mailto:nowatarski.allison@epa.gov); R5Hotline <[R5Hotline@epa.gov](mailto:R5Hotline@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Back Forty Mine Project in Menominee County, Michigan

TO: Acting EPA Region 5 Administrator Robert Kaplan @ [kaplan.robert@epa.gov](mailto:kaplan.robert@epa.gov)  
Re: Back Forty Mine Project in MEnominee County, MI

Dear Mr. Kaplan:

I am writing to second the request of the Menominee Tribe of WI that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S Army Corps of Engineers take over authority from the state of Michigan for the wetland permit for this mine under the Clean Water Act, specifically section 404(G) which allows for states or tribes to take over permitting control for some waterways.

As a Nevada resident who has worked on mining issues, I am well aware of the high potential for acid mine drainage from this mine into the Menominee River watershed.

A new report highlights this possibility:

*U.S. Gold Mines: Spills and Failures Report* summarizes research from multiple sources into pipeline spills, seepage other accidental releases and treatment failures at 27 U.S. gold mines including several in Nevada, by Earthworks of Washington D.C. and Great Basin Resource Watch of Reno, Nevada.

The report found that:

- Gold mines always spill: Mines responsible for 93% of U.S. gold production have accidentally spilled cyanide (from processing gold bearing rock), diesel, or other hazardous materials.

- Gold mines almost always pollute water: 74% of operating gold mines polluted surface and/or groundwater, including drinking water.
- When gold mines don't pollute water, it's almost always because there's no water nearby -- of the mines that didn't pollute water, only one had a perennial stream in the project area.

Therefore it is almost inevitable that this mine, if built, will pollute the Menominee River and/or its many tributaries and vast watershed.

As you must know, eight Native American Tribes, numerous local and regional conservation and community organizations, counties and municipalities as well as the thousands of concerned residents oppose the proposed mine.

Please: look into the EPA taking over the wetland permitting for this proposed disaster waiting to happen! Thank you.

If possible, I would appreciate a reply, or to be put on the mailing list regarding the Back Forty Mine

Sincerely,

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